björk
orkestral

stonemilker

words and music by björk
string arrangement by björk
produced by björk

stonemilker

stonemilker was written on a beech next to grótta in 2012 , which is really close to harpa music hall , where we will perform it . the song for me is cyclical , a big of a mini-fugue , therefore i asked andy huang who did the video with me , if i could walk around the camera in circles and include the panorama surrounding it . there is an emotional attempt in it to be inclusive and with the circular movement unite all , everything , between 2 people .

áróra

words and music by björk
harp and string arrangement by björk
produced by björk

áróra

i wrote áróra on sibelius software i got in 1999 and fell in love with and have used ever since . i am excited to have the original harp arrangement played by both harp and 32 string players in pizzicato . exaggerates the magical frostscapes i was excited about . i wrote the middle section in a cabin in borgarfjörður i stayed in , in winter . i remember the shadow of the mountain came over the whole valley and i tried to worship the shape it made . ever since , when i sing that section , i always remember borgarfjörður and the humility i craved so at that moment .

come to me

written by björk

string arrangement by sureh sathe

musical director of string recording by talvin singh

score preparation matt robertson

produced by nellee hooper

come to me

come to me was written to 2 friends of mine that
i felt like protecting … so i wanted the song to feel
like a velvet blanket wrapped around them .
talvin singh took this song and venus as a boy
to bombay and was a musical director at a recording
of a string arrangment by sureh sathe .
we were doing all this very low budget
so we couldnt afford to go ourselves .
talvin returned with a dat cassette and our minds were absolutely blown !

lionsong

written by björk
string arrangement by björk
produced by björk

lionsong

in lionsong i had rented a cabin just outside reykjavík ,
in heiðmörk . and i was walking in
the protection of the trees , opening up my throat and
tilting my head back thinking, i wanted maximum air to flow
through my body and without
hindrance out of my mouth .
i spent aeons on the string arrangement based on vocal improvisations …
i guess i wanted to move up a step with my arrangements and base them more on the
narrative form of my voice rather than background chords .
the arrangement is probably also
influenced by the crooked birch forest i was walking through .
first song in human scale trees
after the galactical scale of biophilia

i've seen it all

music by björk
words by sjón and lars von trier
srings arranged by björk, vincent mendoza & guy sigsworth
orchestrated by vincent mendoza
produced by björk and mark bell

i’ve seen it all

i remember the melody of "i´ve seen it all"swirling in my head for a year or two with
parts of the string arrangement tailed behind . i remember perhaps a ecstatic and not
so sober evening in london singing it full force underneath one of the bridges in a
marvellous reverb . and i would like to make a confession , at the time i was listening
nonstop to " pavane pour infante defunte" by ravel .
i got deeply inspired by the mood of it , the majestic grande humility is
enormous ! after expressing muscular "homogenic" it was a delight to settle for
the search for enormous gestures inside immense gentleness … or at least try ….

history of touches

written by björk

arrangement by björk and arca

score preparation by matt robertsson

produced by björk and arca

history of touches

history of touches is a poem about when the first time in a relationship (that you had gathered essence to last 5 lifetimes)

is about to end so instead of looking at it forwards into the future

you stand at the end point and look back

the brain does a funny self survival thing

that it goes through all you memories like a filofax and restores them

so i could see all the times we made love flash infront of me and i kept hearing the sound like fingers stroking through filofaxes

and we tried to base the arrangementson that sound :

that brain hick-up of trauma

black lake
written by björk
string arrangement by björk
produced by björk and arca

black lake

i remember writing black lake in

a hot spring rural spa in japan

this was the bottom of my heartbreak

and that combined with jetlag

i hadn´t been able to sleep for a week or so
so at night i would walk down this geo thermal creak and add a verse after verse to this song

it was the absolute surrender

i wanted the strings in the beginning

and at the end to be almost like an old painting where the canvas was coming a part

so you could see through it

and still today when i ask players to play it

i ask them to do it kinda left handed

or if their hand is broken .....

.... then there are the freezes :
long chords where you are so paralysed with sorrow you cant move
but in the middle of the song you have gathered the courage
to express yourself passionately
but still : hopefully the music
a little like an old painting
seen through a
21st century screen

hunter

written by björk
orchestration and arrangement by eumir deodato
produced by björk and mark bell

hunter

hunter was written when i escaped the paparazzi of london
and moved to a studio in southern spain .
i was marching up and down the empty winter beeches
and claiming territory i guess …
it is about the energy most musicians that tour recognize ,
after performing for a long time ,
you return to writing …
and you have to go hunting for melodies
so you can provide for your team .
i came back to the studio with the melody to this marching song …
played mark bell bolero after ravel
and he took out his 909 and wrote the rhythm in one take .
909 fanatics still rave about it to me

isobel

music by björk
words by sjòn
string arrangement by björk
transcription and orchestration by eumir deodato
produced by björk and nellee hooper

isobel

i remember writing the melody of "isobel" in my house in reykjavík , by the window on tryggvagata and thinking it was kinda a strange graceful joke ?!
and later spending an evening with sjón in london hours and hours of explaining who this creature "isobel" was . in hindsight , i feel it was my way of dealing with mythical creature i had become in the media , kinda writing a tongue in cheek song about a magical reality persona and perhaps allowing me to be the author of it and not a victim . and with the proportion of the music on the album , this song was 8 percent , so somehow in the future , i would step into this persona for 8 percent of the time but the other 92 i would be a lot of other characters .
most of them hidden . but all things tongue in cheek have a grain of truth in them and for sure the story of a girl that leaves instinctive impulsive iceland for a calculated cold city was not far off … ?

5 years

written by björk
string arrangement by björk orchestration by eumir deodato produced by björk and mark bell

5 years

5 years string arrangement was done when i was well into homogenic and wanted to take the arrangement further into geometric dimension , making triangle shapes and squares and making them
sound like a synth with different oscillators .
the song is about someone who didnt have courage for love
so i guess the narrator is kinda telling him off
so i wanted the song to be standoffish and cold .
so the arrangement was supposed to be the opposite of jóga
and bachelorette , that were very passionate and open .
therefore 5 years is more of a robotic and
a non vibrato affair

jóga

music by björk
words by björk and sjón
string arrangement by björk
orchestration by eumir deodato
produced by björk and mark bell

jóga

jóga is written to my best friend jóga .
i went to a cabin in midwinter alone for a week ,
my father dropped me there and
i was hiking in the snow and
i remember especially an epic night
with northern lights above ingólfsfjall ,
low clouds below them and
the towns mirroring in them
at the bottom of the horizon .
this was probably the bravest yet
i had gone with an arrangement at that point ,
playing the melodies of the first violin and violas
with clumsy fingers on the piano .
it probably took me a year until i found
the right words for the chorus : state of
emergency … i was walking down a hill in southern
spain , around midnight , singing the chorus again
and again trying to figure out what would match
those vowels and match the emotional intention
jóga deserved

quicksand
music by björk and spaces
words by björk
string arrangement by björk
produced by björk

quicksand
quicksand is about my mother
and a mother daughter relationship
when the mother is the pessimist and the daughter the optimist
i wanted the arrangement to be a lazerbeam of light ,
almost blindness from too much brightness
then go so over-the-top encouraging in the centre of the song
that it would turn up a third ! but also wanted to be honest about the faults of
optimists....: "when we´re broken we are whole and when we´re whole we
´re broken" (the shadow of the optimist ? or the sun of the nihilist ?)
now , who´s the whole one ? we all play such odd roles sometimes ....

bachelorette
music by björk
words by sjòn
string arrangement by björk
transcription and orchestration by eumir deodato
produced by björk

bachelorette
bachelorette for me is part three , of 3 songs
1 : "human behaviour" is the childhood
2 : "isobel" a story of a girl that leaves nature for the big city
she is run by impulse so she gets misunderstood amongst urban logic
it is instinct versus logic . she gets burned so she retreats to rural to heal and isolates herself but trains moths to go back to the city and fly infront of the faces of people who are stuck in making too much sense and say "na na na na" until they snap out of it .
3 : "bachelorette" is then about following the moths , returning again to the city but with
strength wounded and wiser confronting coldness with love therefore i wanted the arrangements to be romantic , as epic as possible , the
grandiousestest drama ever
but still with love

mouth mantra
written by björk
string arrangement by björk
produced by björk and arca

mouth mantra
the orchestra for vulnicura was unusual in the way that it had 5 cellos ,
5 violas and 5 violins …
(most orchestras have around 30 violins , 12 violas and 6 cellos)
this was because i wanted a dark muddy sound , to match the heavyness of sorrow on a heartbreak album .
mouth mantra is not about heartbreak though, it is a song i wrote earlier about having to go to a vocal nodule surgery
the lyric is about all the moments i have sung and all the high notes
my throat has allowed me to sing and the gratitude for that . appreciate all the air that has gone through it so in this song , i decided to add to the timbre of the album as a whole and this be where i would make these muddy deep strings as dense as possible and spent months making it more rhythmic , added friction
and thick thick chords
like nodules

all creative direction and arrangements by björk (unless otherwise stated)
all score preparation by matt robertsson

bergur þórisson - musical director
viktor orri árnarson - conductor miami

THE AYM ENSEMBLE

violins

scott flavin, concertmaster
michelle skinner
karen lord-powell
jaya varma
hyun jee chung
anne chicheportiche
kiku enomoto
abby young
shasha zhang
sandra rubio

violas

yael hyken, principal
chauncey patterson
vivian torres
robyn savitzky
kayla williams
eric eakes
jt kane
madeline neely
brittany cotto
angelica losada

cellos

brent charran, principal
aaron merritt
sarah huesman
boris popadiuk
sarah gongaware
sada mordes
aziz sapaev
reenat pinchas
stephanie jaimes
benjamin whitman

basses

jeff adkins, principal
zacherie small

björk team

james merry - mask design
edda guðmundsdóttir - stylist
jóga - masseuse & herbalist
alex jallow - chef
is she hungry - makeup
rosamary llagostera - björk day to day and wardrobe
hilma kristín sveinsdóttir - björk personal assistant
peter van der velde - production manager
melanie susan knott - tour manager
catherine verna bentley - tour and björk management
derek birkett - björk management
chiara michieletto - björk management and
marketing john gale - audio director
finnur ragnarsson - monitor engineer
richard white - lighting op/designer
iain harvey - video tech and teleprompting
santiago felipe - official photographer

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